



LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C864: Someone Before Us



Chapter 864: Someone Before Us

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"Zhang shi has an idea in mind?" Hu Yaoyao and the others traded glances, and their eyes lit up simultaneously.

As valuable as Origin Heavy Water was, its value couldn't match the maturing Scarlet Firefly Fruits. As master teachers, they could tell that their plan was unrefined, but limited by their cultivation and the resources they had at hand, they were unable to find a better plan.

If Zhang Xuan had an idea, that would be for the best.

"Of course!" Zhang Xuan nodded affirmatively.

"That is great!" Recalling how the young man before them was able to tame over four hundred spirit beasts in two hours, as well as the master of the Byzantium Helios Beast, the four of them couldn't help but tremble in anticipation.

"Here you go!" Dong Xin and the others flicked their wrists and took out a jade bottle each.

It seemed that they had all agreed on purchasing a bottle each and gathering them together after arriving in the valley.

Taking the jade bottles from them, Zhang Xuan uncorked the lid of one of them, and he immediately felt the rich water attribute energy contained within. He could feel his cells quivering in excitement, seemingly desiring the fluid within the bottle to cultivate the Third Incandescence.

"Just wait and see, I will lure those two fellows out!"

However, knowing that this wasn't the time for him to cultivate, Zhang Xuan stowed the jade bottles into his storage ring.

Given how valuable the Origin Heavy Water was, it would be a huge waste to use it to lure the Sabertooth Spirit Tiger away. In any case, he did have another plan in mind to lure out the spirit beasts that wouldn't require the Origin Heavy Water.

In fact, if he wanted to, he could easily sneak in and make it out with the entire tree as his soul.

Since that was the case, there was really no need to waste good Origin Heavy Water on this matter. It could be put to better use in his hands.

But of course, he would make sure to compensate the four of them properly for the Origin Heavy Water too. A compilation on the insights of achieving a breakthrough to Half-Saint to guarantee them a successful breakthrough should be sufficient.

Considering that they were using the Origin Heavy Water to bet on the possibility of obtaining the Scarlet Firefly Fruit, which only raised the possibility of achieving a

breakthrough to Half-Saint, a compilation that could guarantee them a successful breakthrough was definitely worth more than the price of the Origin Heavy Water.

After putting away the Origin Heavy Water, Zhang Xuan asked, "Right, can you share your full plan with me? I can help you analyze it to determine its feasibility!"

"Our plan is actually rather simple. After luring those two fellows out, we will trap them in a formation, quickly obtain the Scarlet Firefly Fruits, and leave," Dong Xin said.

"Trap them in a formation? If you want to trap a Chrysalis realm pinnacle Sabertooth Spirit Tiger, the formation must at least be grade-6. On top of that, it must be capable of activating swiftly... Do you have such a formation plate on hand?" Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

"Un. Just in case an accident occurs, the four of us have prepared a formation plate each, namely a Confinement Formation, Illusory Formation, Beguilement Formation, and Slaughter Formation!"

Since they were going to collaborate with one another, there was no need to hide this matter from Zhang Xuan.

Zhang Xuan shook his head. "It should be possible to trap the Sabertooth Spirit Tiger with the grade-6 formation plates you have on hand, but it isn't a foolproof measure. You will have to pump your zhenqi into the formation to sustain it, but considering the overwhelming strength of the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers, you won't be able to hold on for long under their thrashing... It is uncertain if you will be able to buy sufficient time to procure the Scarlet Firefly Fruit and escape before they break out, so the plan doesn't seem to be particularly reliable."

The main advantage that a formation plate provided was that even those who didn't understand formations could activate and use it as well. However, it had its fair share of disadvantages compared to typical formations, too. Unless one could create a compound formation of it with a Spirit Gathering Formation, one would have to activate and sustain it using one's zhenqi.

The amount of zhenqi a cultivator possessed was limited, so while formation plates might be useful in alleviating dire situations temporarily, their effectiveness was limited in the long-term.

The Sabertooth Spirit Tigers possessed extraordinary strength, so it was hard to say whether or not the formation plates could stall them long enough to obtain the Scarlet Firefly Fruits.

It was no wonder they eventually chose to find him. With this plan, their probability of success was probably even less than twenty percent.

On the other hand, hearing Zhang Xuan's words, their faces turned red.

They also knew that there was a problem with their plan, but there was no alternative they could think of.

After a moment of hesitation, Hu Yaoyao spoke up with gritted teeth. "Zhang shi, if we obtain these Scarlet Firefly Fruits, we are willing to take only one each, and the rest will go to you..."

The other three nodded in agreement.

They knew that it would have been extremely improbable for them to succeed, so they felt embarrassed to share an equal split of the Scarlet Firefly Fruits with him.

In any case, their goal was just to make the breakthrough to Half-Saint. As long as they could succeed, it mattered not whether they obtained one Scarlet Firefly Fruit or two.

Zhang Xuan shook its head. "Let's obtain them first before talking about that..."

It was impractical to be talking about the distribution when they hadn't even obtained them yet.

Understanding this logic, the others nodded, and the group continued proceeded forward.

"The area where the Scarlet Firefly Fruits are located is just around this bend. Let's proceed carefully," warned Dong Xin as she took a look at the surroundings.

The others nodded as they advanced with bated breaths.

While the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers would know that there were intruders due to the presence of the Scarlet Coy Flowers, as long as the intruders didn't possess strength

beyond them, they were unlikely to be alarmed. As long as they were to conceal themselves well and figure out a perfect opportunity to strike, they would still have a shot at success.

Advancing for a little longer, just as they were about to reach the end of the narrow path in the valley, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows suddenly shot up in alarm. "Something's wrong!"

Seeing Zhang Xuan come to an abrupt halt, the others swiftly stopped in their footsteps as well.

"What's wrong?"

However, Zhang Xuan didn't reply to their questions. Instead, he walked over to a nearby boulder and squatted down.

A moment later, he gestured them over and said, "Take a look at this..."

Hu Yaoyao and the others headed over with doubtful expressions, and behind the boulder, they noticed slight traces of fresh soil that was slightly different from its surroundings. It was barely discernible; they wouldn't have noticed it if they weren't paying close attention, but the fresh soil didn't seem to belong to the valley.

"This is..." The others were slightly perplexed by the sight before them.

"This valley seems to be suffering from dry weather, as we can tell from the dry soil in the area. However, these bits of soil carry a slight bit of dampness with them... If I am not mistaken, I believe that someone has entered the valley ahead of us!" Zhang Xuan revealed his deduction.

He had been keeping a lookout on his surroundings using the Eye of Insight, and as inconspicuous as the traces of fresh soil were, he was still able to easily find them and determine their origin.

"Someone has entered the valley ahead of us?"

On the other hand, hearing Zhang Xuan's words, the faces of the others immediately warped in shock.

The main reason they were so persistent about the Scarlet Firefly Fruits here was because there was no one else aware of their existence. If the news regarding them had spread somehow, it would complicate things.

"Un." Zhang Xuan nodded. "Judging from the soil, it seems there are two of them, and it has been less than ten minutes since they passed this point. Also, the stronger of the duo seems to be... a Half-Saint realm cultivator!"

"You are able to tell their cultivation just by these soil traces?"

Everyone was stunned.

Was he a fortune teller?

It might be possible to gauge the time when the soil was left behind by its dampness, but how in the world did he manage to deduce the strength of those who had entered too?

"I have been paying close attention to the surroundings, and I didn't notice any such soil traces behind us. In other words, the other party must have flown in and landed here. I can still feel slight traces of his zhenqi in the surroundings, and through that, it is not impossible to deduce his cultivation," Zhang Xuan replied.

At Half-Saint, a cultivator had already comprehended the ability of basic flight. However, having yet to open the Zhukong acupoint, their flight would be unstable, and zhenqi would leak from their acupoints as well.

If the other party had not stopped here, the leaked zhenqi might have been so faint that it would have been nigh impossible to discern anything. However, as the other party had landed here, a trace of his zhenqi lingered in the area, allowing one to deduce his cultivation.

"Incredible..."

The crowd couldn't help but be awed.

Even though they were master teachers as well, in terms of their meticulousness and analytical ability, they were still far too lacking compared to Zhang Xuan.

Xue Zhenyang's face suddenly turned grim. "If a Half-Saint is here... will the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers destroy the fruits?"

If a Half-Saint was there, the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers would surely have been alarmed. If the spirit beasts were to destroy the fruits out of desperation, they would have made the trip in vain.

Hu Yaoyao shook her head. "I think we should focus our attention on figuring out the identity of those who came earlier than us. If they obtain the fruits before us, it would be no different from them being destroyed to us..."

There was some truth in her words.

If the other party were to obtain the Scarlet Firefly Fruits before them, were they supposed to snatch the fruits from the other party's hands?

As master teachers, they had to conduct themselves appropriately. If they were to be found guilty of snatching a treasure from the hands of another, they would be severely punished by the Master Teacher Pavilion.

The others nodded in agreement as they continued to advance discreetly. After turning at the end of the meandering path, a vast plot of land suddenly unfolded before them.

It was at least several thousand square meters, as if someone had forcefully dug out this space in the midst of the valley. At the end of the path, lying against the cliff face, was a massive cavern. The Scarlet Firefly Fruits were inside it.

Through the Eye of Insight, Zhang Xuan could see dense spiritual energy congregated within the cavern, puffing out from time to time.

"There is indeed someone ahead of us!" Dong Xin frowned.

Following her gaze, there were two silhouettes hiding behind a boulder outside of the cavern, seemingly fiddling with something in their hands.

"A Half-Saint and a Chrysalis realm expert!" Upon discerning the cultivation of the duo before them, the four of them couldn't help but glance at Zhang Xuan in admiration once more.

It was exactly as he had deduced.

"The clothes that they are wearing... are those master teacher robes? But why are they different to ours?" Xue Zhenyang frowned.

It was after Xue Zhenyang's remark that everyone turned their attention to the clothes of the duo. Unlike the normal loose-fitting master teacher robes, the gray robes they wore seemed to be tighter and more fitting. From their side profile, they could vaguely make out a master teacher emblem pinned on their chest, but unlike the usual soothing and magnanimous aura it carried, the emblem they donned felt sharp and aggressive. It seemed as if their eyes would be pricked if they were to stare at it a moment longer.

After a moment of contemplation, Long Cangyue said, "Even if their robes are different from ours, I can still sense that they are master teachers from the unique imprint on their emblems... However, it doesn't seem like they are from Hongyuan Empire. I know nearly all of the experts of their caliber in the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy and Master Teacher Pavilion, but neither looks familiar to me."

"Un." Xue Zhenyang and the others nodded in agreement as well.

As elites of the Master Teacher Academy, they'd had the privilege of meeting many of the top master teachers in Hongyuan Empire. If those two had been from Hongyuan Empire as well, they should have been able to recognize them. Since they couldn't, chances were that they were from a foreign land.

In any case, the mountain range they were in was already beyond Hongyuan Empire's territory, so it wasn't surprising to see foreign master teachers in the area.

"The convention among master teachers regarding the distribution of artifacts is on a first come first serve basis. Once someone has obtained the treasure, the others are not to snatch it by force. Even if they really wish to obtain the treasure, they will have to do so via proper means," Dong Xin said.

In a scenario where many master teachers were going for the same artifact, regardless of means, the first one to obtain it would be considered its owner.

Malicious actions such as killing the person in possession of the item to snatch it were strictly forbidden.

Otherwise, if master teachers were to wrestle one another to death over artifacts, what right would they have to preach to others?

Of course, the side that failed to obtain the artifact could negotiate with the one in possession of the artifact regarding its distribution by offering something in exchange for it or through an official duel... However, if the one in possession of the artifact were to reject all negotiations, there was nothing that could be done.

"It will be over once they lay their hands on the Scarlet Firefly Fruits, so we have to obtain the fruits before them..." Hu Yaoyao said with a grim expression.

A moment later, Hu Yaoyao's eyebrows shot up and she asked doubtfully, "What are they doing?"

Ahead of them, the duo seemed to be in no hurry to rush into the cavern either. The stronger of the duo had lit up an incense and was discreetly manipulating his zhenqi to blow the incense toward the cavern.

"If I'm not mistaken, that item should be Soulshock Incense!" Dong Xin said.

"Soulshock Incense?" Hu Yaoyao and the others asked doubtfully.

"Un. The smoke produced by the incense contains a substance that can beguile a soul with hallucinations. They must be using it to incapacitate the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers

before stealing the Scarlet Firefly Fruits!" Dong Xin explained.

"However, that item doesn't discriminate between friend and foe... If they fill the cavern with the smoke, aren't they worried that they will fall under the effects of the Soulshock Incense as well?"

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